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**REP FARR STATEMENT AT CONSIDERATION OF THE FY2012 AGRICULTURE
APPROPRIATIONS BILL**

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel), Ranking Member of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, made the following opening statement at the Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee's consideration of the FY2012 Appropriations Agriculture bill:

As Prepared for Delivery

The allocation for our subcommittee bill as passed today in Full Committee is \$17.250 billion.

This is:

- \$5 billion or 23% below the 2012 President's request;
- \$2.9 billion or 14% below 2011 enacted; and
- \$6.1 billion (26%) below 2010 enacted.

It is even below 2008 enacted.

With the number you were given Mr. Chairman, I do not envy the position you are in to make these drastic cuts that will affect the very heart of farm country and I do appreciate the effort made to invest our very limited resources wisely and cost effectively.

In tough budget times everyone has to tighten their belts. We all know that.

I want to point out that it doesn't matter if you are a specialty crop producer in California or cotton or peanut producer in Georgia if the resources are not available to deliver the programs, then the effects will be felt in our agricultural and rural areas.

So I was prepared to consider a lean bill. But this bill goes beyond lean. It's beyond skinny. It's downright emaciated. I think there comes a point in budget exercises when you starve the program so much, it just can't function. I fear that's where this bill is going.

The United States is the greatest agricultural producer in the world. We produce more and we produce it more efficiently than any other country. But this bill will undermine the very resources that support our agricultural supremacy.

Farmers will be broken. Jobs will be lost. Ag economies will crumble.

Look at the numbers:

Ag research programs – down by \$361 million. Rural development programs – down by \$195 million. APHIS – down by \$44 million. Farm assistance programs – down by \$287 million. Food Safety Inspection Service – down by \$39.5 million.

What does that mean for people impacted by food borne illnesses?

What of the people, like Sarah Lewis from Freedom, California who was violently ill after eating a custard tart made with eggs contaminated with salmonella? Or of Shirley Almer of Minnesota who died after eating peanut butter also contaminated with salmonella? Or, of Brian Dimock of Maryland who suffered kidney failure at age 5 because of E. coli contamination in apple juice?

Agriculture is the one sector that enjoys a vibrant trade surplus with our international neighbors. What happens when American agriculture can't produce to compete internationally anymore?

And yet this bill cuts the Ag Marketing Service by \$18 million.

The bill also imposes harsh cuts on Domestic Food programs – down by \$1.6 Billion.

Tightening our belts is one thing. But people who depend on supplemental food programs, like WIC, or food stamps, or school lunches, have belts that are already cinched. So it's hard to make peace with a bill that doesn't simply trim WIC, but doesn't even provide enough money to cover all those who will seek assistance.

WIC is down by \$1.48 Billion. How many Moms will lose out on supplemental food for their

infants because of this cut?

Funding for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which serves predominantly low-income seniors, is cut by \$38 million or 22% from the President's request. Discretionary funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which works with states to assist food banks, is cut by \$12 million or 24% below the 2012 request.

In addition, the bill caps funding that TEFAP receives annually from the SNAP (food stamp) program at \$200 million, which represents a loss of \$51 million (20%) to the TEFAP program.

Besides slashing our farm programs and our food programs, the bill also severely limits our investment in safe food and safe drugs. The FDA will take a 21% cut from the President's proposed budget. This has real consequences: This cut will result in the loss of more than 2,000 public health professionals.

These cuts will dramatically limit FDA's ability to implement any of Congress' priorities, whether it be in food safety, medical countermeasures, domestic or overseas drug manufacturer inspections, or overseeing the development of new drugs, devices or generics.

The bill provides \$171.93 million for the CFTC, a reduction of \$136 million (44%) below the request, which will hamper the implementation of the Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation.

If ever there was a place not to cut, it is in the realm of reforming Wall Street. I'm not keen on seeing the banking industry and stock market tank again, but this bill would prevent serious reforms that we need to avoid another Wall Street meltdown.

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